

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00
EB-07 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 SP-02 STR-04
TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 ACDA-07 AGRE-00 CEQ-01
CG-00 DLOS-06 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EPA-01 ERDA-05 FEAE-00
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FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2656
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 2915
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
USMISSION NATO
USNMR SHAPE

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TAGS: EEC, EFIS
SUBJECT: EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL, DECEMBER 20, 1976: RESULTS

REF: (A) EC BRUSSELS 12303 (B) THE HAGUE 6050 (NOTAL)
(C) REYKJAVIK 1664 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS WERE UNABLE TO DECIDE, DURING THEIR DECEMBER 20 COUNCIL SESSION, ON AN INTERIM INTERNAL FISHING REGIME. FACED WITH UNCERTAIN PROSPECTS IN FISHING NEGOTIATIONS WITH ICELAND AND WITH CONTINUED DISSENT AMONG THE MEMBER STATES OVER THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS FOR INTERIM CATCH QUOTAS, THE MINISTERS AGREED ONLY TO A STATUS QUO ARRANGEMENT ON INTERNAL FISHING FOR JANUARY 1977. IN A SEPARATE ACTION, THE MINISTERS APPROVED

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THE NEW SLATE OF EC COMMISSION VICE PRESIDENTS (SEE SEPTTEL).
END SUMMARY.

2. THIRD COUNTRY FISHING NEGOTIATIONS. THE MINISTERS HEARD FROM EC COMMISSIONER GUNDELACH ON THE CURRENT STATE OF EC NEGOTIATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES ON FISHING AGREEMENTS

(SEE SEPTTEL FOR ACCOUNT OF GUNDELACH'S PRESS BRIEFING). UK MINISTER OF STATE DAVID OWEN LATER TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE COUNCIL HAD NOTED "WITH GRAVE CONCERN" THE POSITION TAKEN BY ICELAND. HE EXPRESSED HMG'S HOPE THAT SOME ARRANGEMENT MIGHT STILL BE WORKED OUT BUT SAID GUNDELACH HAD GIVEN THE MINISTERS TO UNDERSTAND THAT NO MOVEMENT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. HE SAID THAT GUNDELACH HAD HOPED THAT THE UK FISHING FLEET WOULD BE ABLE TO RE-ENTER ICELANDIC WATERS JANUARY 1 BUT THAT THIS WAS NOW OUT OF THE QUESTION. HE STRESSED THAT THE MATTER OF HOW TO RESOLVE THE IMPASSE WAS ESSENTIALLY FOR THE COMMISSION AND THE GOI TO RESOLVE AND THAT GUNDELACH HAD BEEN GIVEN A FREE HAND TO NEGOTIATE. HE SAID THAT THE UK WAS BROADLY OPPOSED TO "NEGOTIATING BY THREAT" BUT THAT THE FISHING PROBLEM WAS TIED TO OVERALL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EC AND ICELAND; HE ADDED THAT THE GOI KNEW WHAT WAS INVOLVED. TURNING TO THE EC/NORWAY NEGOTIATIONS, OWEN SAID THERE HAD BEEN AGREEMENT BY THE TWO SIDES TO PRESERVE THE STATUS QUO WHILE NEGOTIATIONS WERE GOING ON. SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND BRUCE MILLAND, WHO JOINED OWEN IN TALKING TO THE PRESS, ADDED THAT REGARDLESS OF THE STATUS OF THE INTERIM INTERNAL REGIME, THE COMMUNITY EXPECTS TO GET A SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT WITH NORWAY PROVIDED MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH (TAC) FIGURES WOULD BE AGREED UPON.

A PRESS COMMUNIQUE ISSUED LATE DECEMBER 21 REPORTED THAT THE COUNCIL ALSO AGREED TO NOTIFY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE CERTAIN THIRD PARTIES INTERESTED IN FISHING IN THE EXTERNAL EC WATERS OF THE EC "AUTONOMOUS ARRANGEMENTS" TO APPLY DURING THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF 1977 (REF A). FORMAL CONSULTATIONS ARE TO TAKE PLACE BETWEEN MEMBER STATES IN THE NEAR FUTURE REGARDING THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INTRODUCTION OF A SYSTEM TO CONTROL THIRD COUNTRY FISHING VESSELS IN THE EC ZONE DURING THIS INTERIM PERIOD. ACCORDING TO THE COMMUNIQUE, THE COUNCIL ALSO DEFINED THE POSITION TO BE ADOPTED BY EC NEAFC MEMBER STATES.

3. INTERIM INTERNAL REGIME. THE MINISTERS WERE, IF ANYTHING, FARTHER APART ON THE INTERIM INTERNAL REGIME DURING THIS COUNCIL SESSION THAN THEY WERE DECEMBER 13. OWEN TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE UK CONSIDERED THE COMMISSION'S NEWLY REVISED QUOTA PROPOSALS AS STILL INADEQUATE, STRESSING, IN PARTICULAR, THAT THERE HAD BEEN INSUFFICIENT MOVEMENT TOWARDS THE UK POSITION ON DEMERSAL (BOTTOM-FEEDING) FISH. HE SAID THAT THE UK DEMERSAL FISH CATCH FOR 1975 HAD BEEN 650,000 TONS, WHILE THE COMMISSION WAS OFFERING 300,000 TONS FOR 1977, BUT HE LATER CLARIFIED THESE FIGURES BY DESCRIBING THE 650,000 TON FIGURE AS THE WORLDWIDE CATCH AND BY PEGGING THE 1975 UK DEMERSAL FISH CATCH IN COMMUNITY WATERS AT 350,000 TONS. OWEN ADDED THAT THERE HAD BEEN AN ABSENCE, AS WELL, IN THE COMMISSION PROPOSALS, OF ANY CONCRETE LANGUAGE OFFERING

RECOGNITION OF THE SPECIAL CASE OF UK COASTAL REGIONS. HE SUMMED UP HIS REMARKS TO THE PRESS BY SAYING THERE WAS STILL QUITE CONSIDERABLE CRITICISM OF THE COMMISSION PROPOSALS ON QUOTAS. HE CONCEDED, (AND AN FRG SPOKESMAN LATER CONFIRMED) THAT, WHILE THE UK AND IRELAND CONSIDERED THE PROPOSALS INADEQUATE, THE FRG AND THE OTHER CONTINENTAL STATES FELT THEY WERE TOO GENEROUS AND THEREFORE UNACCEPTABLE. HE INDICATED THAT THERE WAS DISSATISFACTION, AS WELL, WITH MANY OF THE COMMISSION PROPOSALS FOR CONSERVATION MEASURES, SINGLING OUT INADEQUATE LIMITS ON FACTORY SHIPS.

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4. AGREEMENT ON JANUARY 1977 FISHING ARRANGEMENTS. AFTER CONCLUDING THAT NO AGREEMENT WAS POSSIBLE THIS TIME AROUND ON AN INTERIM INTERNAL REGIME, THE MINISTERS ENGAGED IN THREE HOURS OF DISCUSSION TO DECIDE ON AD HOC ARRANGEMENTS FOR JANUARY 1977. THEIR DECISION, ANNOUNCED AT 2:30 A.M. DECEMBER 21, WAS TO RESTRICT JANUARY 1977 MEMBER STATE CATCHES TO JANUARY 1976 LEVELS. THESE JANUARY CATCH TOTALS WILL COUNT AGAINST QUOTAS EVENTUALLY TO BE FIXED FOR THE INTERIM PERIOD. ALL MEMBER STATES ARE TO REGISTER THOSE CATCHES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCEDURES IN ARTICLE 5 OF THE COMMISSION'S DRAFT INTERIM

REGULATIONS (COPY GIVEN OES/OFA GIFA NEGOTIATION TEAM DECEMBER 13).
THE COUNCIL DECLARATION ON THE AGREEMENT POINTS OUT THAT
THESE ARRANGEMENTS WILL HAVE THE EFFECT OF RESTRAINING COMMUNITY
FISHING FLEETS AND, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DECEMBER 13 THIRD
COUNTRY FISHING RESTRICTIONS, WILL HAVE THE EFFECT OF REDUCING
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TOTAL FISHING WITHIN EC WATERS. THE MINISTERS ALSO AGREED
THAT, DURING JANUARY 1977, EXISTING NATIONAL CONSERVATION
MEASURES WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED AND THAT NO NEW MEASURES WILL
BE UNDERTAKEN. THE MINISTERS REAFFIRMED THEIR INTENT TO REACH
AGREEMENT IN JANUARY ON INTERIM CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT
MEASURES WHICH ARE TO BE IN EFFECT UNTIL A LONG RANGE COMMON
FISHERIES POLICY FOR THE NEW EXTENDED EC FISHING ZONE IS IN
PLACE.

5. IRISH REACTION. IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER FITZGERALD TOLD
THE PRESS THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANCE THE COMMISSION INTERIM
PROPOSALS COULD BE AGREED UPON IN THEIR PRESENT FORM. HE
STRESSED THAT THE COMMISSION HAD HAD ONLY A WEEK TO SYNTHESIZE
WIDELY VARYING MEMBER STATE VIEWS, THAT THE RESULTING PROPOSALS
HAD TAKEN A GENERAL APPROACH RATHER THAN ATTACKING SPECIFICS, AND
THAT THEY WERE THEREFORE UNACCEPTABLE. HE SAID THE DECISION
TO "STOP THE CLOCK" WOULD ALLOW MORE TIME TO WORK OUT PROPOSALS
BETTER ADAPTED TO THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED. FITZGERALD SAID THAT
THERE HAD BEEN AN AGREED PROVISIO THAT THE JANUARY 1976 LIMITS
APPROVED BY THE MINISTERS FOR JANUARY 1977 WOULD NOT APPLY TO
IRELAND AND THAT IRELAND WOULD BE ABLE TO GO ON INCREASING ITS
CATCH IN LINE WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTERS' OCTOBER 30 AGREEMENT
THAT THE IRISH FISHING INDUSTRY COULD DOUBLE ITS CAPACITY
BY 1979 (REFTEL B). HE SAID THAT IRELAND'S AGREEMENT TO
POSTPONE IMPOSITION OF UNILATERAL CONSERVATION MEASURES ON
JANUARY 1 (REFTEL A) WAS BASED UPON REALIZATION THAT THE COMMISSION
NEEDS AND DESERVES MORE TIME TO PREPARE ITS PROPOSALS.

6. AND MORE UK REACTION. AT HIS POST-SESSION MEETING WITH THE
PRESS, OWEN LAID STRESS UPON THE UK'S UNWILLINGNESS TO LOSE ITS
FREEDOM OF MANEUVER WITH RESPECT TO UNILATERAL CONSERVATION
MEASURES, WHICH HMG REGARDS AS AN "IMPORTANT SAFE-GUARD." HE SAID
THAT THE UK HAD SUCCESSFULLY RESISTED ALL EFFORTS IN THE COUNCIL
TO MAKE ADOPTION OF SUCH MEASURES SUBJECT TO PRIOR COMMISSION
APPROVAL. HE SAID THAT THE UK'S DECISION NOT TO IMPOSE UNILATERAL
CONSERVATION MEASURES JANUARY 1, AS THREATENED BY FOREIGN
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SECRETARY CROSLAND (REFTEL B), WAS A RESULT OF HMG'S INTEREST

IN ENSURING THAT THE WHOLE WEIGHT OF THE EC WAS BEHIND THE EFFORT TO GET AN AGREEMENT WITH ICELAND. HE SAID HMG FELT THAT SUCH MEASURES COULD ONLY HAVE AN OPPOSITE EFFECT. UK AGRICULTURE MINISTER JOHN SILKIN TOLD THE PRESS THAT HMG HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN NORTH SEA HERRING CONSERVATION MEASURES BUT HAD DECIDED NOT TO GO AGAINST DANISH INTERESTS THERE FOR THE TIME BEING. SILKIN ADDED THAT HMG WILL BE READY TO IMPOSE CONSERVATION MEASURES IF THERE IS NO AGREEMENT ON AN INTERIM INTERNAL REGIME BY JANUARY 31.

7. NEXT STEPS. OWEN STRESSED THAT THERE COULD BE LITTLE HOPE OF AGREEMENT ON INTERNAL QUOTAS UNTIL THERE WAS A CLEARER PICTURE OF WHAT THE ALLOWABLE EC CATCHES WOULD BE IN THIRD COUNTRY WATERS, PARTICULARLY IN ICELANDIC AND NORWEGIAN WATERS. HE RECALLED THAT THE ICELANDIC PARLIAMENT WILL NOT BE DEBATING THE FISHING ISSUE UNTIL MID-JANUARY. UK PERM REP SIR DONALD MAITLAND TOLD MISSION OFFICER THAT FISHING WOULD PROBABLY BE REFERRED TO DURING THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED JANUARY 18 FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL BUT THAT SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION WOULD PROBABLY BE DEFERRED UNTIL A SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING JANUARY 24 OR 25. HINTON

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